

REMARKS

Claims 1 to 17 have been cancelled and new claims 18 to 32 have been added. In this respect, Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for his careful analysis of the original claims. Great care has been taken in re-writing claims 18 to 32 to make sure there are no Section 112 formality problems. The claim language has been chosen to clearly define the limitations of claims 18 to 32 in clear and unambiguous terms so that the claims distinctly claim and particularly point out the present invention in a patentably distinguishing manner. The invention as expressed in claims 18 to 32 is fully supported by the specification and the drawings, and fully in the possession of Applicant. No new matter has been added.

The invention as expressed in new claim 18 is a machine tool comprising a plurality of stations arranged serially; at least one of said stations being an oriented machining station arranged for holding a workpiece in a fixed position; first and second tool turrets each including a gripping device; said first tool turret being positioned to one side of the oriented machining station; the second tool turret being positioned to another side of the oriented machining station; the gripping device of the first tool turret for taking hold of workpieces at a preceding station, transporting, and positioning workpieces at said oriented machining station; the gripping device of the second tool turret for taking hold of, transporting, and removing workpieces from said oriented machining station to a next station; and wherein the first and second tool turrets are displaceable, at the same time, into a working range of a workpiece held in said oriented machining station.

The prior art cited and applied against the original claims consisted of UK Patent Application GB 2 166 678 A (hereinafter '678) and Garrett US Patent No. 4,597,155 (hereinafter '155). Both were applied as 102 citations. '678 shows a lathe with two tool turrets. A workpiece is held in a headstock 15 and a tailstock 24. This reference does NOT show a multi-stage machine tool having a plurality of stations; a gripping device on each of two tool turrets; and the gripping device for taking workpieces from one station

to another, all as now claimed in claim 18. Accordingly, '678 is not a Section 102 reference against claim 18. Further it is not a Section 103 reference against claim 18 because it does not teach, show or suggest the foregoing enumerated limitations of claim 18 in the particularly claimed combination.

Regarding the '155 patent, this patent shows a two stage boring machine having a tool turret at each stage with the tool turret including a work-handling device for picking up a workpiece and positioning it on a first spindle, using the work-handling device to transfer the workpiece to a second work-handling device on a second tool turret associated with a second spindle. The boring operations are effected by the tool turrets at the two spindle locations. The two tool turrets are held in frames 62 slidably mounted on a single set of rails 64. The horizontal traverse of each frame 62 is controlled by a screw 176 that is driven by a motor 174. As will be seen from the drawings, the horizontal traverse is limited and under no circumstances is there any possibility of the frames 62 being coincident. Therefore, there is absolutely no possibility that the two tool turrets can be positioned to simultaneously bore the workpiece at position P4. Such an event is not contemplated, desirable or possible according to this patent.

Further, a workpiece picked up at the 9 o'clock position by the work-handling 66 which is mounted on the first tool turret, moved to the six o'clock position and then moved to the left (see Fig. 1) to work position P4. When the boring activity is completed at the first spindle, the work-handling device of the first tool turret picks up the workpiece and moves it to the 3 o'clock position, i.e. position P6. At this position, the work-handling device of the second tool turret in its 9 o'clock position, receives the workpiece from the work-handling device of the first tool turret, resulting in an inversion of the workpiece, and moves it to the 6 o'clock position P8 where the second boring action takes place. Thereafter, the work-handling device of the second tool turret picks up the machined workpiece and moves it to the 3 o'clock position where it is discharged.

From the above one can see quite clearly that the following limitations of claim 18 are not met:

"the gripping device of the second tool turret for taking hold of, transporting, and removing workpieces from said oriented machining station to a next station; and wherein the first and second tool turrets are displaceable, at the same time, into a working range of a workpiece held in said oriented machining station."

The Garnett patent '155 does not show or teach either of the limitations of combination claim 18 quoted above. In Garnett patent '155, the second work-handling device cannot pick up the workpiece from the first machining station P4, but must receive it from the first tool turret. As noted above, in the Garnett patent '155 the two tool turrets cannot machine the workpiece held at the first spindle. Modification of the '155 patent to be capable of achieving the quoted limitations could only be accomplished by total destruction of the Garnett patent '155 machine and rebuilding from scratch the machine claimed by of the present invention. This is hindsight; the only source one has of the claimed structure is the present patent application. Accordingly, the claimed structure is unobvious and patentable.

The remaining claims are dependent on Claim 18 either directly or indirectly, but contain all the limitations of claim 18. These claims are patentable for the reasons enumerated above.

In light of the foregoing remarks, this application should be in condition for allowance, and early passage of this case to issue is respectfully requested. If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

It is respectfully requested that, if necessary to effect a timely response, this paper be considered as a Petition for an Extension of Time, time sufficient, to effect a timely response, and shortages in this or other fees, be charged, or any overpayment in fees be credited, to the Deposit Account of the undersigned, Account No. 500601 (Docket no. 7400-X03-039)

Respectfully submitted,



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